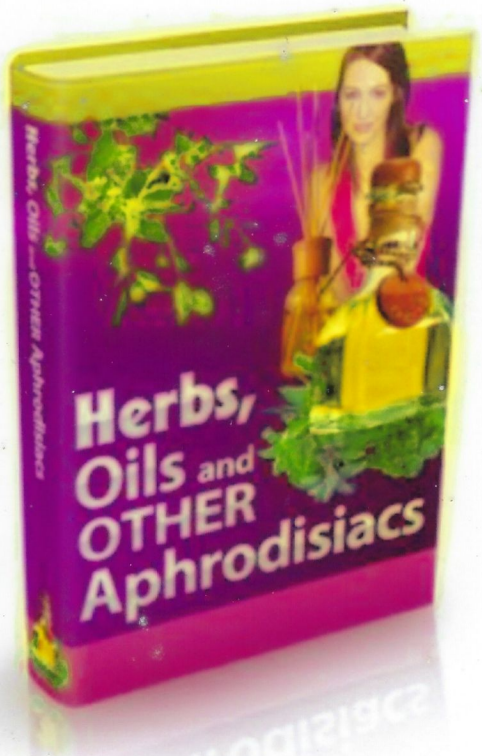
Herbs, Oils, And Other Aphrodisiacs



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DISCLAIMER:

This book was written for informational purposes and is not a substitute for educated herbal practitioners, traditional or contemporary medicine, or medical advice. Information here is offered as an overview gathered from many sources. It is a way to begin an educational and/or transformative journey, and while it includes a few "recipes," it is not a comprehensive guide to the use of herbs, oils, or aphrodisiacs. Use your intuition and research to find teachers with expertise, should you choose to explore the field further.

1
INTRODUCTION

"What the world needs now is love, sweet love."
Burt Bacharach and Hal David

Herbs, oils, and other aphrodisiacs have been used in all cultures around the world to stimulate feelings of love, sensuality, desire, and sexual arousal, enhance sexual abilities, and even mitigate sexual dysfunctions. Herbal practitioners believe aphrodisiacs can help overcome emotional challenges such as anxiety, stress, or trauma, and even directly overcome physical issues such as difficulty with erections or lubrication.

In addition, any herb preparation that eradicates illness or provides nutrients that have been lacking in the body can be considered an aphrodisiac. This is especially true if sexual urges and sexual life return as a result of using it.

But it must be said that:

- even though the mandrake root is mentioned in the Bible's Book of Genesis (30:14-16) as an aphrodisiac, and Julius Caesar (100-44 B.C.) used herbal scents such as frankincense and myrrh as aphrodisiacs...

- and even though it's been written by more than one historian that Cleopatra used the intoxicating scents of cinnamon, cardamom, and rose along with the tastes of chocolate and rare curries to bewitch and entice her lovers...

- and even though the Romans reportedly used 3,300 tons of aphrodisiac herbs per year in the first century A.D.,...

... the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has categorically stated that there is no such thing as an aphrodisiac.

Many herbalists and traditional healers disagree, and so, this book can be written.

From Merriam-Webster's Dictionary Online:

Main Entry: aph-ro-di-si-ac

Etymology: Greek aphrodisiakos sexual, gem with aphrodisiac properties, from aphrodisia heterosexual pleasures, from neuter plural of aphrodisios of Aphrodite, from Aphrodite, the Greek Goddess of love

1: an agent (as a food or drug) that arouses or is held to arouse sexual desire
2: something that excites

— aphrodisiac, also aph-ro-di-si-a-cal \ adjective

The above is a perfectly correct and viable definition of an aphrodisiac. It may also be perfectly inadequate for the purposes of this book. That's because the concept of aphrodisia as practiced by traditional herbalists is broader than just physical arousal.

Aphrodisiacs do not work just on the body or just on the mind, but on the two in conjunction. Furthermore, although some of the attributes of aphrodisiacs have proven and direct physical responses associated with them, aphrodisiacs, like love, have a side that is all mystery. It is about the mysterious synthesis of the physical and the emotional (although some brain research suggests that emotions and physiological functions are *both* brain functions really), and about the balancing of the two to create an atmosphere that is conducive to love.

For example, in the Five Elements theory of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), jasmine (Jasminum officinalis) is a superior essential oil used for "harmonizing the Heart and Fire Elements." Jasmine is in the same category as rose and lavender — essences that "support the Qi-energy of the Heart" and relax organs, calm nerves, and help their users to release tension. Qi means vital life energy and animation, sort of... it's a concept that is hard to translate. In this context, jasmine also uplifts the mind in a way that Western medicine has no words for. The Chinese call this uplifting the "Shen." Shen is not so much the whole mind, but a quality of the mind — as Westerners might understand intellectual mind vs. intuitive mind, etc.

The way jasmine uplifts and soothes Shen makes it a first choice of essential oils for treating depression, anxiety, restlessness, and unsettled mental energy. It's used on both a sexual and emotional level combined because jasmine also traditionally re-activates passion in the mind and body. But it's not just physical passion. It rekindles the passion of the body *while reuniting it with love.* Jasmine is known as a Fertility Herb, but fertility can mean more than conceiving a child — it means fertility and restored ability to create, period. It restores not just the body's capacity to reproduce, but also the capacity for creativity in the mental and spiritual realms.

So we have a substance that influences a physiological response that in turn results in emotional feeling (relaxation, well-being etc.). It's alsqij; I.T coming in to create harmony between the thoughtful self and the creative ' self. An aphrodisiac is a substance that makes a positive intervention and brings things into balance.

These are all undoubtedly functions of brain chemistry ultimately. But the ways that the different aspects of ourselves influence each other is part of the mystery of being human. The more we know about ourselves scientifically, the more we see that there is no such thing as "mind only" or "body only." Even the attempt to distinguish simple lust from true love falls short when our minds and bodies don't agree. Our human wiring can either confound us or bring us inexpressible joy.

So, to say that love originates both in the brain *and* in the body may be true, but it also doesn't express how it works or why it suddenly flares and ripens, and it certainly doesn't solve — or spoil — the mystery. Aphrodisiacs help us connect to ourselves in the primal rhythms of life without having to understand it intellectually.

ANCIENT WISDOM

The most ancient and traditional cultures seem to know the most about aphrodisia. They also have healing traditions that emphasize the need for balanced practices to support emotional and physical health and the use of natural substances to being people back to balance when they're ill or out-of-sorts.

The information in this book has been drawn very much from the wisdom of traditional cultures, filtered through those who have brought it forward into contemporary times through modern Western practitioners. The pages that follow include references to theory and practice from India (Ayurveda), Chinese Traditional Medicine and Five Elements Theory, Native American and European Herb Lore, and several others. As such, if there's a bias in the book, it's toward a holistic view of humans and their minds/bodies as understood in those cultures. The underlying thesis of the book is that using aphrodisia is one way that humans can restore optimal health and balance in their lives.

2
APHRODISIA: SOME PHILOSOPHY AND IDEAS

TRADITIONAL HEALING

In traditional healing, there is not such a great separation between science, psychology, and art — or indeed, any separation between them at all. Restoring harmony and the appetite for life is certainly an art, and healers would naturally be artists. However, they would have to be scientists as well when we consider that no one told the original practitioners of plant medicine what to do. There had to be a process alien to Western Medicine (as it's taught, if not entirely how it's practiced) in which the healer felt intuitively drawn to a particular substance and tested its efficacy over time — chewing ginger root for nausea, for example.

A traditional medicine person would understand healing as a complicated, uniquely personal interaction of elements. The patient's well-being was influenced by her treatment of herself, her interaction with the community, the laws of nature, the communities of animals and spirits, as well as supernatural beings and forces, nature itself, past and present action, and the Creator(s).

A traditional healer becoming adept in the wisdom of plants would have to also become a psychologist, historian, and biochemist. The healer/artist would also use the arts: chanting, painting, storytelling, repeating tales and spells through retold myth and poetry, costuming, and inventing rituals and performances. All of these abilities would have to be cultivated and work together organically.

But no doubt that the traditional healer did not see these many functions as discreet form one another, but as all authentic parts of the healing process. To leave any of it out would seem illogical, maybe even blasphemous.

A traditional healer would feel, would know absolutely that no human could thrive without *all* of the above elements being in balance and would